

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 10 July 2014

PRESENT: Mr A J King, MBE (Chairman), Miss S J Carey, Mr R H Bird (Substitute for Mrs T Dean, MBE), Mr N J D Chard, Mr J Elenor, Mr C P D Hoare, Mr R A Latchford, OBE, Mr S C Manion, Mr L B Ridings, MBE, Mrs P A V Stockell, Mr D Smyth and Mr N S Thandi

ALSO PRESENT: Mr G Cooke, Mr J D Simmonds, MBE and Mr B J Sweetland

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs A Beer (Corporate Director Human Resources), Mr J Burr (Director Highways, Transportation & Waste and Principal Director of Transformation), Mr D Cockburn (Corporate Director Strategic & Corporate Services), Ms B Cooper (Corporate Director Growth, Environment and Transport), Mr R Fitzgerald (Performance Manager), Mr M Scrivener (Corporate Risk Manager), Mr D Shipton (Head of Financial Strategy), Mr C Smith (Operations Manager Contact Point), Ms R Spore (Director Property & Infrastructure Support), Mr G Wild (Director of Governance and Law), Mr A Wood (Corporate Director of Finance and Procurement) and Mrs A Hunter (Principal Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

65. Introduction/Webcast announcement
(Item A1)

The Chairman announced a change to the order of the agenda and said that Item B3 – Performance of Kent Gov Website and Contact Point would be considered before Item B1 – Transformation Agenda.

66. Apologies and Substitutes
(Item A2)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Davies, Mrs Dean and Mr Long. Mr Bird attended as substitute for Mrs Dean.

67. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda
(Item A3)

Mr Hoare made declarations of interest in Conduit - an ICT company that places young people in employment in the construction industry and because his son was being assessed for a statement of special educational need.

68. Minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2014
(Item A4)

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2014 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

69. Minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee
(Item A5)

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 23 June 2014 be noted.

70. Performance of Kent Gov Website and Contact Point
(Item B3)

- (1) Mr Sweetland (Cabinet Member for Commercial and Traded Services) introduced the report which outlined issues contributing to the performance indicators for Kent.gov website and the Contact Point as requested by the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee at its last meeting on 23 April 2014. He encouraged all Members to visit the Contact Centre where officers were working very hard in a challenging environment.
- (2) Mr Sweetland said that historically the Contact Point and the website had performed well but a number of factors, including the Transformation Agenda, flooding, an increase in the number and complexity of calls relating to Children's Social Services, changes to the speed awareness courses, an increase in enquiries relating to secondary school admissions and the home care tender, had come together which had an impact on performance. He said that 12 more advisers were being recruited to resolve short term issues and that a new communications system that would increase flexibility to respond to peaks and troughs in demand would be implemented shortly. He also said that questions that would give an accurate measure of satisfaction with the website were being developed.
- (3) Ms Cooper (Director of Economic and Spatial Development) said that a new customer service policy was being developed to ensure the focus on customers remained at the centre of the transformation programme.
- (4) In response to questions Mr Smith (Operations Manager–Contact Point) said that calls relating to social services were often generated by stories in the media, the Contact Point conducted an initial screening before putting them through to Social Services, call volumes were similar to last year but the duration of each call had increased and there were fewer staff to respond.
- (5) It was confirmed that calls about children's and adults' social services were prioritised within the Contact Point, the website was being developed to enable customers to upload photographs of potholes and that, although the authority would continue to have a Contact Point, it was important that as many customer issues as possible were resolved through the website thereby driving down demand on the Contact Point.
- (6) Resolved:
 - (a) That the report be noted;
 - (b) That a further report on progress be received at the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Cabinet meeting on 19 September 2014.

71. Transformation Agenda - Verbal Update

(Item B1)

- (1) Mr Burr (Principal Director of Transformation) gave a verbal update on Facing the Challenge. His presentation covered the approach to transformation, the outcomes and recommendations from Phase 1, the procurement activity and timelines, an update on Phase 2 and the priorities for communication and engagement with staff.
- (2) In response to questions, it was confirmed that fiscal challenges were likely to continue and that the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee would have the opportunity to consider business cases before decisions were made on any changes to services.
- (3) Resolved:
 - (a) That the report be noted;
 - (b) That electronic copies of the slides be circulated to members of the committee.

72. Total Facilities Management

(Item B2)

- (1) Mr Cooke (Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services) introduced the report which provided an update on the implementation of a Total Facilities Management solution and sought the views of the committee on a proposal to delegate a biannual review of performance against key contract outcomes to the Property Sub-Committee.
- (2) Ms Spore (Director of Property and Infrastructure Support) said that about 60 members of staff would be affected by the proposals set out in the report.
- (3) Resolved:
 - (a) That the report be noted;
 - (b) That a biannual review of performance against key contract outcomes be delegated to the Property Sub-Committee.

73. Strategic and Corporate Services Directorate Dashboard

(Item C1)

- (1) Mr Fitzgerald (Performance Manager) introduced the report which set out progress made against targets for Key Performance Indicators. He drew Members' attention to GL03 Data Protection Act Subject Access requests completed within 40 calendar days which had a red "RAG" rating. He said the target had been increased this year, and performance had improved. The June position showed that performance was on target for the month.
- (2) Mr Wood (Corporate Director of Finance and Procurement) provided further information about FP01 (Pension Correspondence processed within 15 working days), FP03 (Invoices received by Accounts Payable within 20 days of KCC received date) and FP06 (Percentage of sundry debt due to KCC outstanding over 6 months old).

- (3) Regarding FP01 Mr Wood said that detailed guidance on the new Local Government Pension Scheme which came into effect on the 1 April was not received until 27 March. A letter was sent to all members of the scheme advising of the changes and this had resulted in increased correspondence and in particular for estimates for early retirements. The software provider had been unable to update the software resulting in a need for manual calculations. 170 requests for estimates were outstanding, the team had capacity to deal with 40 per week, about 40 new requests were received each week, four new staff had been recruited and although performance had improved in June, continued improvement in performance could not be guaranteed.
- (4) Mr Wood said that the number of invoices received by Accounts Payable within 20 days (FP03) was in line with previous years and that rolling out iProc would influence performance against this target. He also said that invoices were usually paid within 48 hours of being received by Accounts Payable.
- (5) Mr Wood said that negotiations with the Home Office were close to a result and it was likely that, a resolution on outstanding six-month debt would be achieved soon. It was suggested that, if necessary, figures including and excluding the Home Office debt be included in the next report.
- (6) Ms Beer (Corporate Director Human Resources) confirmed that HR01 (satisfaction with the resolution of people-management cases rated good or above) related to feedback from managers about the level of support they received from HR and said information about the numbers of grievances were considered annually by the Personnel Committee.
- (7) Resolved that the report be noted.

74. Financial Outturn Report for 2014-15

(Item C2)

- (1) Mr Wood introduced the report which set out the provisional revenue and capital outturn as reported to Cabinet on 7 July 2014.
- (2) Resolved that the provisional revenue and capital outturn for Council in 2013/14 be noted.

75. Risk Management -Strategic Register

(Item C3)

- (1) Mr Scrivener (Corporate Risk Manager) introduced the report which presented the strategic risks relevant to the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee, which included risks featured on the Corporate Risk Register for which Strategic and Corporate Services' directors are the designated risk owners. The report also asked the committee to consider and comment on the Strategic and Corporate Services risks outlined in appendices 1 and 2.
- (2) Resolved that the report be noted.

76. Legal Services - Evolution, Efficiency, Enterprise Project Annual Report - 2013-2014
(Item C4)

- (1) Mr Sweetland (Cabinet Member for Commercial and Traded Services) and Mr Wild (Director of Governance and Law) introduced the report which gave an update on progress of the Legal Services Evolution, Efficiency Enterprise Project.
- (2) It was proposed by Mr Chard and seconded by Mrs Stockell that the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee congratulate and thank Geoff Wild and his team for the continuing success of the Legal Services Evolution, Efficiency and Enterprise Project.

Carried

- (3) The committee also considered that it was important that Kent County Council maintained a controlling interest in whatever vehicle might be used to deliver the service in the future.
- (4) Resolved:
 - (a) That the report be noted;
 - (b) That Geoff Wild and his team be congratulated and thanked and for the continuing success of the Legal Services Evolution, Efficiency and Enterprise Project.

77. Budget Consultation 2015-2016
(Item D1)

- (1) Mr Simmonds (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement) introduced the report which set out the preferred approach to consultation on the 2015/16 budget, building on and developing the most successful aspects of the consultation on the 2014/15 budget. The report also asked the committee to consider and endorse the proposed consultation arrangements and to make recommendations on any changes and enhancements.
- (2) Mr Simmonds also said that he had received only one request to attend a local public meeting although both he and Miss Carey had been willing to attend such events.
- (3) During the discussion concerns were raised about the possibility of multiple submissions from the same person, the desirability of gathering information about respondents balanced against concerns about responding to the consultation using a traceable email address. Members were reminded that the control mechanisms within the sample surveys were designed to give an assurance that consultation responses could be relied upon to represent the wider views of Kent residents.
- (4) Resolved that the report be noted.

78. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

79. Facing the Challenge - Property Review Update *(Item E1)*

- (1) Mr Cooke (Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services) introduced the report which provided an update on the current direction of travel in respect of the Facing the Challenge Review for Property and Infrastructure Support Services).
- (2) Ms Spore (Director of Property and Infrastructure Support) said that a final decision about the future of the service had not yet been made, outlined the primary functions of the Property and Infrastructure Support Services and provided detailed information about the options considered and the proposed preferred option.
- (3) It was confirmed that if a local authority trading company (LATCO) were established it would be wholly-owned by Kent County Council, with appropriate governance arrangements and members would continue to have oversight of performance.
- (4) Resolved:
 - (a) That the report be noted;
 - (b) That the quality of the report be noted and that it be used as a template for the presentation of future proposals within the Transformation Programme.